

# BRONCHIECTASIS

Bronchiectasis is a common lung disease caused by chronic infection in small airways that results in some parts of the lung becoming damaged, scarred and dilated, allowing infected mucus to build up in pockets.

## CAUSES

The most common, known cause of bronchiectasis is a history of a severe chest infection, particularly in childhood. Often, the cause is completely unknown. **Conditions that increase the risk of bronchiectasis include:**



**Pre-existing lung conditions**



**Immune deficiencies**



**Disorders that affect mucus clearance from airways**



**Chronic inflammatory diseases that affect connective tissue**

## SYMPTOMS

The most common symptoms of bronchiectasis include:



**Long-term, chronic cough**



**Sputum production**



**Fatigue**

Other symptoms include:



**Chest pain**



**Shortness of breath**



**Coughing up blood (known as haemoptysis)**

An increase in these symptoms may be a sign of an exacerbation (flare-up) of bronchiectasis and you should seek advice from your health professional.

## DIAGNOSIS



A chest X-ray may not always show changes suggestive of bronchiectasis.

**The diagnosis of bronchiectasis is now nearly always made using a chest CT scan.**

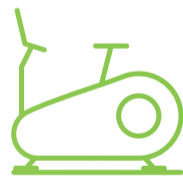
Your doctor may also request for your blood or sputum to be tested to see if you have an infection or a condition that may have led to bronchiectasis.

## TREATMENT

Treatment aims to decrease airway blockage and reduce the amount of infected mucus in the airways, making it easier to breathe.



**Chest physiotherapy:**  
For sputum clearance



**Exercise:**  
such as pulmonary rehabilitation is an exercise program that reduces breathlessness, fatigue, anxiety and depression<sup>i</sup>



**Antibiotics:**  
for maintenance to help suppress bacteria that cause infections



**Vaccinations:**  
against influenza and pneumococcal infection.

## BRONCHIECTASIS ACTION PLAN

Helps to treat day-to-day symptoms and recognise when symptoms change and the action you should take to prevent an exacerbation or flare-up. Patients should develop this plan with their doctor or nurse.



## SUPPORT

For more information on the range of treatment options, resources and support services available, **please contact Lung Foundation Australia.**

**IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY SYMPTOMS SPEAK TO YOUR DOCTOR.**

FIND OUT MORE  
**lungfoundation.com.au**  
or phone 1800 654 301.



**Lung Foundation Australia**